

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 10, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Chairwoman Lowey, and Ranking Member Granger,

We write in strong support of the National 4-H Council and other youth mentoring organizations that have stepped up to offer educational and emotional support for isolated children and families during the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 55 million children have lost familiar environments, daily routines, and support systems in recent months, and the impact on learning loss could extend well beyond the end of this crisis. As the House considers further COVID-19 aid legislation, we urge you to incorporate immediate supplemental funding for USDA and Department of Justice youth development grants to sustain distance learning and mentoring activities for young people at this critical time.

4-H is the nation's largest youth mentoring organization, serving more than six million youth nationwide. National 4-H Council and USDA's Cooperative Extension have marshalled their collective resources and expertise to expand the free *4-H at Home* platform, offering lessons and activities on STEM education, civic engagement, and healthy living.

Youth development and mentoring programs like *4-H at Home* are helping children address the trauma and confusion created by the pandemic by:

- reducing isolation and building nurturing relationships with mentors;
- mitigating "learning loss" in essential subjects like math and reading;
- stimulating youths' innate desire to learn; and
- fostering agency and identity.

Many youth development organizations, including 4-H, have shifted their activities online in recent months. The new emphasis on remote learning creates a need for additional resources to train educators to employ emerging best practices in youth development, and to develop new distance learning content at an accelerated pace. Supplemental funding for the following youth development grant programs would support the efforts of these organizations and ensure they can continue to reach young people in isolation:

- In 2018, Congress reauthorized dedicated youth development grants for the National 4-H Council as well as Girl Scouts of the United States of America, the Boy Scouts of America, and the National FFA Organization, established in 7 U.S.C. 7630(d)(2). However, these grants remain unfunded. **We encourage an appropriation of \$12 million for this grant program.**
- 4-H and many other mentoring organizations rely on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)'s Youth Mentoring Grant, a competitive grant supporting mentoring to our nation's most vulnerable youth. OJJDP grants supported youth mentoring organizations in all 50 states in 2019, helping children avoid alcohol, tobacco, and drug use. **We encourage an appropriation of \$250 million for DOJ Youth Mentoring Grants to support mentoring activities for vulnerable youth during the pandemic.**

Children and families coping with the current public health and economic uncertainty need targeted, integrated support from experienced partners like 4-H to ensure children stay on-track in their educational and personal development. 4-H is a tried-and-true partner capable of delivering this essential service. Please consider providing the additional resources for youth development organizations in any future COVID-19 relief legislation.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Collin C. Peterson
Member of Congress



Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress



Cindy Axne
Member of Congress



Rick Crawford
Member of Congress



Bennie Thompson
Member of Congress



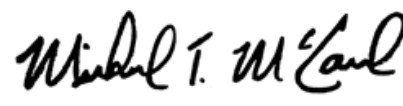
Jeff Fortenberry
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress



Will Hurd
Member of Congress



Michael T. McCaul
Member of Congress



David Trone
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



TJ Cox
Member of Congress



Dusty Johnson
Member of Congress



Roger Marshall, M.D.
Member of Congress



Glenn 'GT' Thompson
Member of Congress



Anthony Brindisi
Member of Congress



Trent Kelly
Member of Congress



Terri A. Sewell
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Frank D. Lucas
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Brian Fitzpatrick
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Troy Balderson
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Jim Costa
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Jamie Raskin
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Carol D. Miller
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